

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04
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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4530

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 0226

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: GATT, ETRD

SUBJ: GATT BALANCE OF PAYMENTS COMMITTEE - ARGENTINA

REF: (A) GENEVA 221 (B) 75 GENEVA 8759

1. REFTEL (A) DISCUSSES GATT BALANCE OF PAYMENTS COMMITTEE'S
WORKLOAD FOR 1977. WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT
MINI-CONSULTATION WITH ARGENTINA. WASHINGTON MAY RECALL THAT
BELLIGERENT RESISTANCE TO FULL CONSULTATIONS IN 1975 THREATENED
VIABILITY OF MINI-CONSULTATION PROCEDURE AND CREDIBILITY OF
COMMITTEE ITSELF (REFB). WE BELIEVE THAT FUTURE EFFECTIVE-
NESS OF COMMITTEE COULD BE IMPROVED BY HOLDING FULL CONSULTA-
TION WITH ARGENTINA THIS YEAR. TO REVIEW, ARGENTINA SHOULD
HAVE BEEN EXAMINED IN 1975 BUT GOT OFF BY THROWING A TANTRUM.
WE AND COMMITTEE SAVED FACE BY SAYING THAT ADDITIONAL PAPER ARGEN-
TINA SUBMITTED AT LAST MINUTE MADE FULL CONSULTATION UNNECESSARY.
IF A COUNTRY AS LARGE AS ARGENTINA CAN MAINTAIN SERIOUS RE-

STRICTIONS AND CONTINUALLY ESCAPE FULL CONSULTATION, THE
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BOP EXAMINATION PROCEDURE TRULY WILL HAVE LOST MEANING.

2. GIVEN THE MERCURIAL AND FREE-WHEELING STYLE OF
ARGENTINA'S AMBASSADOR IN GENEVA (MARTINEZ), AND RECALL-
ING HIS CWEKXYQGPZARFORMANCE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE BEST
PROSPECT FOR CONVINCING ARGENTINA TO AGREE TO FULL CON-
SULTATION IS TO APPROACH GOA IN BUENOS AIRES BEFORE

MARTINEZ GIVES THEM HIS INPUT.

3. A GOOD CASE CAN BE MADE THAT ARGENTINA'S COMPLEX REGIME BEARS EXAMINATION SINCE IT HAS NOT HAD BOP COMMITTEE AIRING SINCE 1972. FURTHERMORE, FROM ARGENTINA'S POINT OF VIEW 1977 SHOULD BE A GOOD YEAR FOR CONSULTATIONS SINCE, BASED ON THE LAST SIX MONTHS' REPORTS FROM EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA HAS BEGUN TO LIBERALIZE ITS TRADE REGIME AND APPEARS TO BE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

4. WE BOUGHT SOME TIME IN 1975 BY BACKING DOWN TO MARTINEZ' THREATS TO PUT THE LDC'S ON THE WARPATH. TO BEGIN THE ROAD BACK, WE SHOULD PAY THE PRICE OF COMMITTING OURSELVES IN ADVANCE TO BEING REASONABLY HELPFUL TO ARGENTINA DURING THE CONSULTATION, AND WE URGE THAT THIS BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR APPROACH IN BUENOS AIRES. WE DO NOT SUGGEST WE ENLIST AID OF EC, AS THEY HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN KEEPING ARGENTINA OUT OF A FULL CONSULTATION. DOUBTLESS ARGENTINA WILL TEAR AFTER THEM FOR THEIR MEAT IMPORT POLICIES. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THE EC AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE ASKED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME TO AGREE TO A COMMITTEE DECISION TO INVOKE A FULL CONSULTATION IF ONE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE WANTS ONE.

5. WE HOPE THAT WASHINGTON WILL BEGIN NOW TO CONSIDER THIS PROBLEM. AS REGARDS TIMING, SUGGEST WE MAKE APPROACH IN BUENOS AIRES IN MARCH, AS THE COMMITTEE
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